



Synthesis Note

C1_HOR-3

Support for WES-BCA Partner Countries in Preparing their
7th National Reports (7NRs) under the Convention on
Biological Diversity (CBD)

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WATER ENVIRONMENT SUPPORT - BIODIVERSITY AND CLIMATE IN THE NEIGHBOURHOOD SOUTH REGION

The regional EU funded “Water Environment Support-Biodiversity and Climate Action (WES-BCA)” project is the continuation of WES project and capitalises on the experience of three more successful predecessor regional EU funded projects SWIM-Horizon2020 SM, SWIM SM and Horizon 2020 CB/MEP. It supports the countries of the Southern Neighbourhood Region in addressing the improvement and protection of the environment, the restoration of biodiversity and the management of scarce water resources, while enhancing the resilience to climate change in the Mediterranean region, strengthening the formulation and enforcement of the relevant policies of the Partner Countries and the two regional political frameworks, namely the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) and the Barcelona Convention. WES-BCA will enhance the capacity of relevant stakeholders in order to support them in formulating and implementing policies in the aforementioned issues, raise awareness, increase knowledge and improve public understanding, stimulating behavioural changes needed for appropriate climate action and environmental protection.

WES-BCA has two components which will run hand-in-hand:

COMPONENT I (Water, Biodiversity and Environment) with the specific objectives:

- to promote an integrated approach to biodiversity protection/restoration and pollution reduction/prevention
- to manage more efficiently scarce water resources in the Southern Neighbourhood

COMPONENT II (Communication and Outreach) with the specific objective:

- to raise awareness and better understanding by the general public (and specific segments of the population) including youth and women are promoted stimulating adoption of appropriate behaviours and attitudes towards improved climate action and effective environmental protection.

DISCLAIMER:

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ABBREVIATIONS

<i>7NR</i>	Seventh National Report
<i>CBD</i>	Convention on Biological Diversity
<i>COP</i>	Conference of the Parties
<i>DG MENA</i>	Directorate-General for the Middle East, North Africa and the Gulf
<i>EC</i>	European Commission
<i>EQA</i>	Environment Quality Authority
<i>EU</i>	European Union
<i>GBF</i>	Global Biodiversity Framework
<i>IUCN-Med</i>	International Union for Conservation of Nature - Mediterranean
<i>H2020 CB/MEP</i>	Horizon 2020 Capacity Building/Mediterranean Environment Program
<i>MAP</i>	Mediterranean Action Plan
<i>MENA</i>	Middle East and North Africa
<i>NBSAPs</i>	National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans
<i>NR</i>	National Report
<i>SAPBIO</i>	Strategic Action Programme for the conservation of BIOlogical diversity
<i>SCBD</i>	Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity
<i>SPA/BD</i>	Specially Protected Areas and Biological Diversity
<i>SPA/RAC</i>	Specially Protected Areas / Regional Activity Centre
<i>SWIM SM</i>	Sustainable Water Integrated Management-Support Mechanism
<i>SWIM-H2020 SM</i>	Sustainable Water Integrated Management and Horizon 2020 Support Mechanism
<i>UfM</i>	Union for the Mediterranean
<i>UNEP/MAP</i>	United Nations Environment Programme / Mediterranean Action Plan
<i>WES</i>	Water and Environment Support in the ENI Southern Neighbourhood Region project
<i>WES-BCA</i>	Water and Environment Support - Biodiversity and Climate Action

1 CONTEXT OF THE ACTIVITY

The Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) entered into force on 29 December 1993. Since the entry into force of the CBD, the Parties have submitted six National Reports (NRs). COP15 of the CBD, held in December 2022, adopted the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF), containing a 2050 mission, a 2030 vision, 4 strategic goals, 23 targets as well as indicators for monitoring, financial support, and scientific cooperation. In adopting this ambitious strategic framework, the 196 Parties to the CBD agreed to align their National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs) with the GBF well in advance of COP16, scheduled in October 2024 and to report in their 7th National Report (7NR) in 2026 and 8th National Report (8NR) in 2029 on progress and difficulties in the implementation of their aligned NBSAPs. The Parties also decided to carry out a global review of progress in the implementation of the GBF at the COP17 to be held in Yerevan, Armenia on 19-30 October 2026. The main source of such a review will be the information contained in the 7NR submitted by the Parties. Therefore, the submission of the 7NR by Parties is crucial for the preparation of the report to be submitted by the Secretariat of the CBD (SCBD) at least one month in advance of COP17.

At national level, many Mediterranean countries are advancing biodiversity strategies and submitting National Reports to the CBD to track progress toward global goals. The 7NR assesses national biodiversity trends, policies, and strategies, highlighting efforts to conserve and sustainably use biological diversity. Its preparation involves cross-sectoral data collection and stakeholder engagement, ensuring transparency and accountability. Despite global and regional efforts, practical national activities were still lagging behind, and countries were seeking guidance to address key pressures on biodiversity while reporting effectively.

Several Mediterranean countries have undertaken initiatives to achieve CBD targets, yet many WES-BCA Partner Countries have requested support in preparing and submitting their 7NRs. Recognizing the challenges countries face in updating their CBD strategies, including the preparation of the 7NRs by February 2026, the WES-BCA project, which has Biodiversity as one of priority areas in its current phase (2024-2027), developed together with the UfM, the current activity to provide targeted regional support to enhance technical and institutional capacities.

The current activity aimed to foster dialogue on key biodiversity challenges, promote alignment of national efforts with the CBD provisions as well as regional and global frameworks, and support Partner Countries in preparing their 7NRs under the CBD. The main objective of the activity was to provide targeted support to Partner Countries by giving them the opportunity to discuss with the CBD Secretariat effectively aligning with the CBD, the Kunming-Montreal GBF, as well as the Mediterranean biodiversity commitments, taking also into account and benefitting as much as possible from relevant regional approaches including the EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030.

Its specific objectives were to:

- Strengthen Partner Countries' technical capacity to align their 7NRs with CBD requirements and Mediterranean biodiversity commitments.

- Promote alignment between national strategies and regional frameworks to ensure coherence with the biodiversity commitments under the Barcelona Convention (UNEP/MAP and its protocols), the UfM and relevant EU policies and initiatives.
- Facilitate knowledge exchange, regional cooperation and peer learning on biodiversity challenges and commitments in the Mediterranean through webinars and coaching.
- Provide a “close-to-end” opportunity and easily accessible way for the Partner Countries to clarify any questions, address uncertainties, fill in gaps and resolve challenges related to the preparation of the 7NR.

2 SUMMARY OF ACTIVITIES

The following activities were carried out:

- **Task 1: Communications with key actors and background assessment**

Communication with key actors, including the Secretariat of the CBD (SCBD), as well as regional actors with a clear mandate or relevant involvement in biodiversity-related issues in the Mediterranean, including the DG-MENA, DG-ENV, UNEP/MAP, IUCN and the UfM, was carried out, in order to set up communication lines, discuss the outline of the collaboration for this activity and agree on the scope of the Webinar to be organised as part of the activity.

In parallel, a background assessment was carried out to identify recent challenges, gaps, and priorities in biodiversity reporting, based on feedback collected by the Partner Countries concerning their progress on the preparation of the 7NR, but also the challenges they were facing and the points in need of clarification by the SCBD.

In September 2025, a first short survey was circulated among CBD Focal Points concerning the progress in the 7NR preparation and potential needs for assistance. The survey revealed that the PCs were actively working on their 7NR for the CBD with several highlighted potential challenges in meeting the 28 February 2026 deadline. In December 2025, a second survey was circulated to identify questions, gaps, and challenges they were facing in the preparation of the 7NR, as well as to communicate their progress. Feedback from Partner Countries was collected and its assessment helped refine the regional webinar agenda, inform the Q&A sessions, and guide the selection of appropriate speakers.

- **Task 2: Provide Coaching**

Targeted support was provided, upon request from Partner Countries, through coaching sessions. These sessions aimed to further strengthen technical and institutional capacities to ensure the timely finalization of the 7NRs. The key actions undertaken include:

- **ALGERIA:** The webinar was preceded by the participation of the WES-BCA expert at the Biodiversity Intersectoral Committee of Algeria convened to finalize the adoption of the NBSAPs aligned with the GBF, held on 24th December 2025. This event was followed by a

meeting held on 8th January 2026 with the national consultant for the preparation of the 7NR. The results of this meeting were brought to the attention of the Algerian CBD focal point at a meeting held on 9th January 2026.

- **TUNISIA:** In the context of the WES-BCA Senior Biodiversity Expert's back-to-back mission to Tunisia, a meeting was held on 15th January 2026 with senior officials including the CBD Focal Point of the Ministry of the Environment of Tunisia. The WES-BCA expert was also invited as a guest keynote speaker at the opening session and contributed to the discussions during the national validation workshop of Tunisia's 7NR (5 February 2026).
- **PALESTINE:** Under Activity C1_N-PS-1, the WES-BCA project provides technical support to Palestine's Environmental Quality Authority (EQA), serving as the National Focal Point, to facilitate the preparation of its 7NR to the CBD. This activity, which aligns with the GBF, focuses on conducting a rapid stocktaking of existing data from the National Clearing-House Mechanism (CHM) and the 2022 NBSAP to identify information gaps and prioritize technical needs and provide support for the report. A team of international and local experts assisted the EQA in interpreting national and global indicators and synthesizing data into the required CBD formats to support a comprehensive assessment of Palestine's progress toward its 17 National Targets. Furthermore, the activity's scope includes supporting the EQA in assessing how national actions contribute to the 23 Global Targets and the framework's long-term goals. The activity also aims to assist the EQA in reporting implementation measures, such as resource mobilization and stakeholder engagement, while identifying specific technical and financial obstacles to inform future support requirements. The project team is collaborating with EQA to support the drafting of the 7NR.

- **Task 3: Organizing a Regional/Horizontal Webinar on Reporting Structures and Indicators**

The webinar on Reporting Structures and Indicators was organized on 21st January 2026. The main objective of the webinar was to provide a "close-to-end" opportunity and easily accessible way for the Partner Countries to clarify any questions, address uncertainties, fill in gaps and resolve challenges related to the preparation of the 7NR.

The invitation to the Webinar was sent by 11 December 2025. A Concept Note and the Agenda of the webinar were prepared in English and French and circulated to representatives of Partner Countries.

The Webinar was held online to allow for the participation of the Partner Countries and the representatives of the SCBD. Indeed, 71 people attended the meeting, amongst which representatives of seven (7) Partner Countries, as well as representatives of the SCBD, of the UfM, the Barcelona Convention's SPA/RAC, DG MENA, DG Environment of the European Commission, and IUCN.

The meeting opened with remarks from WES-BCA, SCBD, SPA/RAC, UfM, DG-ENV and DG-MENA of the European Commission. The following session included a detailed presentation on the preparation of the EU's 7NR and the activities of the Technical and Scientific Cooperation Support Centre (TSSC), as well as a presentation by a representative of the IUCN Regional Programme on efforts to organize coordinated technical and scientific support mechanisms for the implementation of the GBF in the Mediterranean region through the operation of the TSSCs. A tour de table then followed, during which

representatives of the Partner Countries shared updates on the status of the preparation of the 7NR. They also took the opportunity raise questions and seek clarifications from SCBD representatives on technical issues related to the report's preparation. The webinar concluded with closing remarks, and the Partner Countries were encouraged to contact the SCBD for further clarification and to share any difficulties and gaps encountered.

- **Task 4: Compile a synthesis report.**

A synthesis report on the progress, outputs, and outcomes of the regional activity and lessons learned was prepared.

3 MAIN OUTPUTS AND OUTCOMES

All activities were conducted successfully thanks to the excellent collaboration and coordination of all key actors involved.

The background assessment was carried out in a timely manner, facilitating the refinement of the regional webinar agenda, and the selection of appropriate speakers, and the identification of Partner Countries in need of coaching.

The Webinar fully achieved its expected results. It brought together the countries of the region to exchange information on the status of preparation of their 7NR and to share their respective gaps and difficulties. It offered a forum for the Partner Countries to seek clarification and technical support from the SCBD. The Webinar was considered as a valuable and informative event by the SCBD representative.

Coaching sessions were successfully provided for three (3) Partner Countries.

The main result of the activity was to assist the Partner Countries in addressing gaps and challenges in preparing their 7NRs to the CBD, ensuring they meet their commitment to submit the reports on time. The activity also provided a platform for dialogue between the representatives of the SCBD and the Partner Countries to address the technical difficulties, gaps and challenges facing the preparation of their 7NR based on the report template as contained in decision 15/6 of the COP and the revised template adopted by decision 16/32 in October 2024. At the same time, the activity promoted the exchange of experiences and best practices among the Partner Countries on the preparation of the 7NR and strengthened the communication and synergies between WES-BCA, SCBD, UNEP/MAP, IUCN and others on Biodiversity issues.

The activity material is available here: https://www.wes-bca.eu/activity/c1_hor-3-support-for-wes-bca-pcs-in-preparing-their-7th-national-biodiversity-reports-under-the-convention-on-biological-diversity-uncbd/